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INSIDE



New Building

After more than a decade of planning, Mount Carmel School will proudly open the doors to its new middle school building on Aug. 11 this year.

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Tourism Growth

The global travel and tourism industry should grow by nearly 6 percent this year, showing it has bounced back from the effects of terrorism, war and the SARS epidemic, industry experts said Sunday.

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Test Drive

This week we test drive the 2004 CR-V 4WD EX, Honda's ingenious compact SUV that becomes the very first vehicle we've driven that comes standard with a picnic table. Yes, a picnic table!

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Draft rules on multiple jobs could soon take effect

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The draft regulations allowing alien workers to seek multiple jobs are now published in the Commonwealth Register and may possibly take effect after a few weeks.

This came about after the U.S. District Court consented to the settlement agreement between the former Department of Labor and Immigration and Filipino worker Bonifacio Sagana in a federal civil case.

Assistant Attorney General James Livingstone, who represented the DOLI,

said the draft regulations have been published in the Commonwealth Register since April 23.

The draft regulations are now open for public comment.

Livingstone said the draft could become effective after 30 days from its publication in the Register but the department

could decide to extend the public comment period and possibly introduce amendments before the regulations are adopted as final.

Public comments may be forwarded to the DOL's chief legal counsel, Kevin Lynch, through tel. no. 236-0910 or fax

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Govt fleet cards seized

Non-payment of gas bills results in card suspensions

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

At least 30 fleet cards issued by Mobil Oil Marianas to CNMI government agencies for gas purchases were confiscated beginning Friday last week due to mounting unpaid gas bills.

Finance Secretary Fermín Atalig refused to specify how much the government owes Mobil Oil but he assured yesterday afternoon that a check has already been issued last week to pay off the arrears.

Atalig said he would check today with the Treasury Division to confirm whether the check was issued to Mobil so that all confiscated fleet cards are returned to the proper agencies for their use.

"I can't comment on that yet; I would have to check first if the check was issued out. If Mobil received the check, that should settle it. As I understand, we had arrears in March. If that is so much a problem, I think we should settle that," said Atalig.

On Friday, Mobil Oil gas stations began confiscating fleet cards of several government departments and agencies due to non-payment of gas bills. The gas company revoked the fleet cards while personnel were gassing up. The company issued an internal "hot list" to its

See GOVT on Page 8



BUSY, BUSY, BUSY

The CNMI judicial complex in Susupe gathers VIPs from the CNMI's three branches of government and the legal profession circle, together with guest magistrates from Micronesia and the United States, including U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder. The CNMI yesterday commemorated the independence of the CNMI Supreme Court from the appellate jurisdiction of the Ninth Circuit.

JOHN RAVELO

Verizon deal OK'd, 27 issues resolved including the retention of employees

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The CNMI government and Pacific Telecom Inc. have narrowed down the issues remaining to be resolved before a final resolution is reached for the purchase of Verizon's local carrier, Micronesian Telecommunications Co.

In a nine-page Final Agreed Negotiation Report submitted to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Commission by settlement officer Sean Emory Frink, the government and PTC agreed

on 27 issues, including an end to inter-island long distance charges to Tinian and Rota and the retention of all Verizon employees.

"The parties agree that, once the financial audit is complete and, if the report satisfies the concerns of the parties and the CTC, the commission may issue the final approval of the proposed purchase," said Frink.

He said the parties have agreed on the proposed stock purchase of MTC, with the contingency that a final audit of the transaction and several issues

that remain to be resolved be decided by the CTC board.

The CNMI government, the CNMI Consumer Counsel and PTC agreed that no tolls will be charged for inter- and intra-island calls, including all phone calls and phones to ISP services.

PTC also agreed to join the National Exchange Carrier Association as soon as possible upon closing the agreement. Its membership to NECA will provide assistance to rate and tariff development, industry database management, compli-

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Deputy AG flunks NMI Bar exams

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Deputy Attorney General Clyde Lemons Jr. flunked the recent CNMI Bar Examinations administered by the local Supreme Court, a few months before his government attorney license expires.

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Local

'La Fiesta shutdown won't happen at once'

By LIBERTY DONES

REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents said that, while it voted to shut down its La Fiesta complex operations, the mall's actual closure could not take place soon.

Board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said in an interview Friday that the NMC still needs to review the tenants' contracts.

"It doesn't really mean it's tomorrow," she said, even noting that some tenants can choose to stay. She said the board is aware of possible legal consequences that may arise following the board's decision Friday.

"That's the issue that we're discussing with our legal counsel. At the same time, the college administration is holding talks with the tenants because we have contractual obligations with them," she said.

King-Hinds said the mall's tenants have been apprised of the La Fiesta situation since early this year. She said the tenants had been told that the board would make a decision about its plans with La Fiesta by May 1.

There are 22 tenants at La Fiesta that pay rent to NMC following the college's takeover of the complex in January this year.

Some of these tenants were reportedly the ones that want-

ed to get out of the complex, citing huge business losses since the takeover.

As of March, the college said it already gave La Fiesta tenants a chance to choose an early exit from their existing lease agreements.

NMC also moved to renegotiate its contractual services with La Fiesta vendors in efforts to save on operational costs.

These came following findings that NMC itself has been incurring significant losses since its acquisition of the property last August and its takeover of the facility this year.

At the same time, the purchase of the facility for NMC's

Pacific Gateway project has become a big accreditation issue with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which recently rejected NMC's midterm report and placed the college on warning status.

WASC had also required the

college to submit a substantive report on the Gateway project.

NMC has since submitted its revised reports to WASC, resulting in the visit of a WASC evaluation to the college last week.

On Friday, the board decided to put the Gateway project on

hold and to shut down its La Fiesta operations.

This despite Gov. Juan N. Babauta's assurances that he would help the college in its undertakings, especially with the Gateway project, which he sees as a lucrative investment.

Police arrest poker shooting suspects

By SHAN SEMAN

REPORTER

Three men suspected of shooting a security guard and a cashier at a poker establishment in Sadog Tasi Thursday last week are now in the custody of the Department of Public Safety after a joint operation that led to their arrest.

Two of the suspects, brothers Darrel M. Quitugua, 27, and Daniel M. Quitugua, 25, were arrested Friday, April 30. The third suspect, 26-year-old John G. Pangelinan, was arrested Saturday, May 1, after he turned himself in to the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

The Quitugua brothers were arrested in a joint operation by men of the CID's Thief Apprehension Select Coalition, Attorney General's Investigative Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Criminal Division of the Attorney General's Office.

The three are believed to be

behind the shooting of 50-year-old cashier Yun Ji Jiang and 47-year-old security guard Angelo Labore, who were both hit in the arm during an attempted armed robbery at the Capitol Poker game room.

Jiang and Labore were brought to the Commonwealth Health Center where they were treated. Both are in stable condition. Jiang was released but Labore was admitted for further treatment.

DPS Public Information Officer Sgt. Thomas A. Blas Jr. said that while patrol officers were proceeding to the crime scene, a separate incident occurred involving the pursuit of a vehicle along the back road of 16th Highway in Papago.

The vehicle, which was stolen, was later found abandoned in a ranch area.

Investigation and the recovery of a surveillance tape from Capitol Poker showed that the vehicle being chased by officers in Papago was the same vehicle

used to flee the poker establishment after the shooting.

Blas said the collaboration of the agencies using information taken from the vehicle, information from their own sources, and several anonymous calls through the NMI Crime Stoppers hotline led to the identification of the suspects.

The U.S. Attorney's Office yesterday filed a criminal complaint charging Pangelinan and Daniel Quitugua in federal court. No charges have been filed against Darrel Quitugua yet.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Smith charged the defendants with Hobbs Act robbery conspiracy and using and carrying a firearm during crime of violence.

Chief Judge Alex R. Munson imposed no bail on the two defendants and remanded them to federal custody. The judge scheduled a preliminary hearing on the case on Thursday. (*With John Ravelo*)

'SARS tourism impact not as worse as last year'

By LIBERTY DONES

REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente predicts that the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome

on travels would not be as worse as last year "because it is now easily contained."

This, as he expressed optimism that the resurgence of SARS in China would not ham-

per China flights to the CNMI.

Two additional flights a week from China to Saipan began recently following the U.S. Department of Transportation's approval of China Southern Airlines' application for scheduled flights from Shanghai. China Southern Airlines also flies twice-a-week from Guangzhou to Saipan.

This is on top of other investors' plan to introduce more flights from China to Saipan.

Meanwhile, local authorities led by the Department of Health and the Commonwealth Ports Authority have reactivated a SARS response team to ensure that the disease is prevented from entering the CNMI.

Authorities said the World Health Organization has issued no travel restrictions to and from China. WHO said that SARS in China could be easily contained and controlled.

Four cases of SARS have been reported in Beijing and Anhui province since last month.

One of the Anhui patients died after attending to her daughter, who earlier developed SARS-like symptoms.

SARS was first reported in February 2003 and reached its peak in April and May, resulting in dramatic drop in international travels and significant losses in the industry worldwide.

SARS has sickened about 8,000 people and killed about 800.

jollibee

rms

Use of Tinian hangar as arrival area approved

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

In preparation for the direct China Southern Air flights to the West Tinian International Airport, the Commonwealth Ports Authority has approved the use of the old Tinian airport hangar as an arrival terminal, as requested by the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

With direct flights expected next month, the CPA approved the request on the condition that the hotel would pay \$10 a month to use the facility until the completion of the new Tinian airport.

The request was approved last March 5 during the CPA Board of Directors' regular meeting.

While reviewing the request, vice-chair Antonio Camacho questioned whether the \$10 fee was reasonable based on the scope of the work that will be done to improve the facility, which he believes may range between \$25,000 to \$30,000.

It was not immediately clear who will foot the expenses to renovate the facility—CPA or

Tinian Dynasty. However, CPA said it will require in the permit that the plans be subject to final approval by the CPA Engineering Department.

Safety issues were also raised due to the hangar's location, but Salas said the approval is conditioned upon meeting the safety issues.

The actual request was to turn the hangar into a new departure area, but in a meeting with Tinian Dynasty's Tom Liu, CPA executive director Carlos H. Salas recommended that the hangar be used only for arrivals because using it for departure will burden the Transportation Security Administration to move the checkpoint to the building, which also requires authorized expenses from the TSA. CPA will also have to make improvements to the hangar facility.

The original request also stated that the hangar would be used for \$10 a month for the next 40 years, but was placed under permit basis by Salas, who stressed that it will expire when the departure building is completed.

Firm wants Rota mayor to pay up

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Despite a court order, the Rota Mayor's Office has yet to settle its debt with a company that had provided materials and rendered rehabilitation work after super-typhoon Pongsona devastated the island more than a year ago.

DK Brothers threatened to make Mayor Benjamin Manglona personally liable for the judgment, demanding that the mayor settle his office's obligations by tomorrow.

The firm also pressed Manglona to waive all penalties and interests arising from the unpaid taxes by the company and Rota Merchandising Corp., blaming their financial difficulty on the local government's nonpayment of its debt.

The Superior Court had ordered the mayor's office to pay DK Brothers and Rota Merchandising Corp. a total of \$86,987.34, including the costs associated with the lawsuit. After the court order, the mayor's office only paid DK Brothers \$28,100, according to the firm's Pedro Q. dela Cruz.

"We lost a lot of income op-

portunities due to your failure to pay us on time. It is pathetic that you continue to enjoy the comfort of your office and also the resumption of cable TV service to the island while we suffer financial hardship and loss of income opportunities, as well as the CNMI government is [sic] threatening to levy all of our other income to satisfy the taxes owed," dela Cruz said.

Had the mayor's office paid the company on time, dela Cruz said the firm would not have incurred unpaid taxes.

Dela Cruz also accused Manglona of misrepresenting that his office had asked the CNMI government to pay the company.

He said Manglona earlier assured them that contractors could offset unpaid taxes against outstanding balances owed them by the local government

in connection with services related to rehabilitation work after Pongsona.

Dela Cruz said Manglona never communicated with DK Brothers despite receiving a copy of the court order.

"Should the government continue to insist that we must pay interest and penalties [for unpaid taxes], my attorney is ready to go back to court to amend the judgment to include all interest and penalties. We will also ask the court to include you to be personally liable as an individual as part of the judgment," he said.

He added: "We responded quickly to your plea for assistance after the storm and we expect that you do the same."

In the lawsuit, DK Brothers claimed to have renovated the mayor's office, which was destroyed by the super typhoon, for

\$15,535. It also claimed to have repaired the Rota Health Center in the amount of \$1,200.

The firm also said it provided repair work to the MCV Building for \$18,600, besides some \$40,000-worth of equipment services rendered from Dec. 11, 2002 to Feb. 10, 2003.

Rota Merchandising Corp., meanwhile, said it provided construction materials in the renovation of the mayor's office, costing the company \$3,288.75. The company is also claiming an additional \$3,300 to redeem disaster relief coupons tendered by farmers and fishermen.

The mayor had issued relief coupons to farmers and fishermen to help them recover right after Pongsona destroyed crops and affected their livelihood. The disaster also left the harbor in Songsong Village totally destroyed.

Yumul wants garment firm monitored

Rep. Ray N. Yumul yesterday expressed concern over the fate of NET Corp., a garment company that was recently sanctioned by the Garment Oversight Board for failing to abide by an industry-wide class action settlement agreement.

"If NET Corp. is barred from selling to the U.S. market, its financial status will likely be in jeopardy, so we have to monitor the situation very carefully," said Yumul, adding that the company might eventually be financially insolvent.

Yumul is particularly concerned with the plight of NET Corp.'s garment employees, should the company experience financial difficulties.

"If the company ends up folding, I would be worried about the repatriation of the employees. So

we have to look at the bonding companies and make sure they are sound," said Yumul.

"If NET Corp. cannot even afford to pay \$1,500 per month in restitution pursuant to the settlement agreement, is this an indication that their financial condition is grave?" he asked

Before the Garment Oversight Board decided to decertify NET Corp., the Saipan Garment Manufacturers' Association removed the company from its membership roster.

The board, headed by a panel of judges and attorneys, was formed pursuant to the \$20-million class action lawsuit settlement reached by the local garment industry and suing attorneys.

Although some local garment companies refused to be a party to the settlement agree-

ment, they are reportedly forced to comply with its conditions nevertheless. NET Corp., for instance, was decertified for its failure to remit monthly payments ranging from \$1,500 to \$6,000 to the board.

According to the class action settlement agreement, garment firms decertified by the board will not be eligible to conduct business with U.S. retailers who are parties to the settlement agreement.

Levi Strauss & Company was reportedly the only major U.S. apparel retailer that refused to sign on to the settlement agreement, only to be later vindicated in court through a dismissal of the lawsuit against it in January 2004.

Under the terms of the agreement, NET Corp. could still do business with Levi's but not the other major U.S. buyers.

verizon
cmyk

cars unlimited

Tinian lawmaker opposes casino industry on Saipan

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Tinian Sen. Henry H. San Nicolas urged the CNMI leadership yesterday to allow Tinian's economic development plans to prosper by not putting up obstacles such as allowing a casino on Saipan, as proposed by former governor Froilan Tenorio.

In a letter to other senators, San Nicolas said that, without the support of the entire CNMI leadership, Tinian's casino industry might fail, particularly since talks of the establishment of a casino industry on Saipan continue to flourish.

"I ask you [to] please give the Tinian casino industry the chance to breathe, the chance to grow, and the chance to eventually succeed. The question remains, will Tinian's economic hopes and dreams vanish as a result of a competition from Saipan casinos?" the senator asked.

He said that Tinian has been pursuing its dream of economic prosperity for over 50 years now and it has been the island's dream to make it a reality.

San Nicolas conceded that the CNMI needs economic investments but bringing casino gaming to Saipan will have a profound impact on the already existing industry on Tinian.

The Tinian senator narrated that since the '60s, Tinian's

dreams kept getting foiled by direct competition from other countries.

"In the 1960s it was the beef and milk industry, in the 1970s, the U.S. military investments. Both suffered from impacts while the lands leased to the U.S. Department of Defense remain raw and could not be touched for another 55 years," he said.

Tinian's gaming industry was enacted into law in 1989. In 1998, the first Tinian casino was built.

"A look back at Tinian's recent history will reveal that we have tried to participate in the economic development of our islands, but success has been fleeting," said San Nicolas.

He said that, if the proposed casino operation on Saipan is approved, Tinian would suffer. He urged members of the Senate to not allow history repeat itself.

Last month, Tenorio submitted to the House of Representatives a proposed measure that would establish a casino industry on Saipan. The proposal aims to set up a "well-regulated" casino industry that provides honest entertainment free from the influence of undesirable elements will increase tourism to the Commonwealth and provide needed government revenues."

Crime Stoppers seeking tips on Gold's Gym burglary, vandalism

The NMI Crime Stoppers is seeking tips and information from the public for its featured crime of the week—a burglary and theft incident at the Gold's Gym in China Town.

DPS Public Information Officer Sgt. Thomas A. Blas said the crime happened on April 18, 2004.



Police reports showed that the suspects entered the front door by breaking through the glass door. The suspects stole the cash register, yanking it off its counter, resulting in damage to other office equipment and merchandise. The suspects fled with cash and company checks on hand.

Crime Stoppers believes the crime was committed between the evening hours of April 17 and early morning of April 18.

Blas said the number of suspects involved has yet to be determined.

The establishment also fell victim to acts of vandalism in November 1999.

Reports showed that the suspects tried but failed to enter the gym through one of its doors at the rear of the building. Frustrated, the suspects set the door on fire.

Authorities have yet to determine the number of suspects involved in the crime.

"The crime of burglary, theft and criminal mischief or vandalism has one of the highest rates among criminal acts occurring in the CNMI," Blas said in a statement. "The [DPS] receives an average of at least four complaints daily of these types of crime. Residential areas have been victims of these crimes, but private businesses and government agencies have also fallen prey."

Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards of up to \$1,000 for information leading to an arrest. Caller ID is not used and all calls remain anonymous.

Anyone with information about the crimes is urged to call the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (*Shan Seman*)

146 homestead lots distributed on Rota

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Marianas Public Lands Authority said it has distributed a total of 146 homestead lots on Rota, representing the largest distribution of lots on the island in almost eight years.

The lot distribution, which was done through a lottery last Friday, was participated in by 148 eligible homestead applicants.

Eligible applicants are those who have completed their files and are personally on island.

Acting MPLA commissioner Frank M. Eliptico said the lots drawn were composed of 145 lots in Dugi and three lots in Sinapalo.

He said these included lots that were either revoked from previous homesteaders who failed to comply with permit requirements or lots surrendered by homesteaders for various reasons.

In his remarks, MPLA board member Nicolas Nekai said the lot drawing represented "the largest mass distribution of village homestead lots in almost eight years."

He said it was also an acknowledgement "of your direct lineage to your cultural heritage."

"Being of Northern Marianas descent and your cultural link to our Chamorro ancestry is one of the basic criteria that qualify you to be a proud recipient of this lot drawing," said Nekai.

He urged the lot owners to maintain and beautify their properties.

He also urged other agencies and community partners to assist the homesteaders in terms of home financing.

In particular, he said homesteaders can seek financing assistance from the Marianas Public Lands Trust under its affordable home mortgage program.

Nekai acknowledged that homesteaders face a dilemma: lack of basic needs such as water, power, sewer systems, and other basic infrastructure in the homestead areas.

"These are an integral part of a planned development of a large community such as the Dugi subdivision," he said.

He expressed confidence that the board is "on top of these issues and it stands ready to ensure that sufficient lands areas are designated and made a part of the ongoing development projects."

The lot drawing, held at Rota Public Library, was reportedly attended by Gov. Juan N. Babauta.

MPLA said the government has so far awarded over 3,277 homestead lots on Saipan, 1,038 subdivision lots and 370 agricultural lots on Tinian, and over 861 home lots on Rota.

The government has been giving away 900 square meter of public lands to each homesteader for residential purposes since 1979.

KES PTSA meeting tomorrow

The Koblerville Elementary School is inviting all parents and guardians to attend the final Parents Teachers Students Association meeting of the 2003-2004 school year tomorrow, May 5, at 6pm, in the school cafeteria. Teacher Appreciation and End-Of-The-Year activities are two of the items on the agenda.

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Rule of lawlessness

In Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad was widely feared as a place into which men disappeared, never to be heard from again. In U.S.-occupied Iraq, the same prison, which now contains Iraqi prisoners of war, has become notorious again. Last week, deeply disturbing photographs from the prison surfaced in the media. They show naked Iraqi prisoners lying in pyramids on the prison floor, other Iraqis with masks on their heads and at least one prisoner standing on a box, wearing a black hood; apparently, he was told that if he fell off the box he would be electrocuted. Many of the pictures also feature U.S. soldiers, laughing, pointing and pretending to shoot at the genitals of the naked prisoners. Taken together, the photographs demonstrate some of the most demeaning, humiliating and shameful treatment of prisoners imaginable, short of actual physical torture.

Originally, the photographs appeared on CBS' "60 Minutes," and a few newspapers, including The Post, published some as well. In the rest of the world, however, they have been leading the news, in Europe as well as on television stations and in newspapers across the Arab world. It's impossible even to guess how much damage they have done to America's image in the world, to the cause of stability in Iraq and even to the cause of democracy in the greater Middle East. The fact that some of the soldiers in charge of the prison have now been suspended or penalized will surely be overlooked by foreign audiences, and the fact that the prisoners had attacked U.S. troops matters not at all. Most ordinary people will only absorb the message that the United States is a cynical and hypocritical conqueror, an occupying power with no regard for the dignity of the people it is trying to liberate.

There is an important and deadly serious lesson here, for American politicians as well as military commanders: The rule of law matters, even where America's worst enemies are concerned. Although it has become fashionable, in certain Washington circles, to play down the importance of "outdated" forms of international law such as the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war, this incident demonstrates just how important it is to teach the rules of the Geneva Convention to soldiers at all levels and to apply them as strictly as possible. It also underlines the potential dangers of this administration's refusal to set up adequate legal processes governing prisoners taken in the war against terrorism and detained in Baghdad, Bagram, Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere. Better than any legal treatise, these photographs demonstrate the potentially corrupting effect of the atmosphere of lawlessness in these prisons. It must not be allowed to continue.

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Consequences of drug importation need to be understood

By MORTON KONDRAKE
Special to The Baltimore Sun

And it's coming not only from Democrats such as John Kerry, but from Republicans as well.

Lately, the conservative Republican governors of Minnesota and New Hampshire, Tim Pawlenty and Craig Benson respectively, have defied federal law to set up Web sites enabling their citizens to import drugs from Canada. Wisconsin has one, too, and others are in the planning stage in Illinois and Michigan.

In Congress, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, has introduced legislation to permit imports first from Canada and, three years from now, from the 25 countries in the European Union, three others in the European Free Trade Association, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Even though mass drug importation is a terrible idea—it will retard pharmaceutical research and medical discoveries that can save lives and will allow entry of unsafe counterfeit drugs—the idea has polls, politics, high drug prices and public demand behind it.

The only barriers are the short congressional election-year calendar, opposition from House leaders and the distant prospect of a presidential veto. Even before a veto, President Bush needs to make foreign price controls (and the costs they pass on to American consumers) a trade issue. His first opportunity will be at the Group of Eight summit of industrialized nations in June.

Price controls are the reason for a huge difference in prices for drugs in the United States versus other countries, where governments control prices. U.S. consumers can get their drugs cheaper from U.S. online pharmacies, but they are still cheaper abroad. It's estimated that 2 million Americans are buying their drugs abroad, either individually or through states.

A New York Times survey last week showed that the Abbott Laboratories AIDS drug Norvir costs \$715 for a one-month supply in the United States and \$540 from Drugstore.com, but \$59 in Canada and \$61 in the Netherlands.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson

has warned Pawlenty that he is encouraging citizens to purchase "unapproved, illegal drugs" that neither the Food and Drug Administration, the Canadian government nor the states will guarantee as safe.

Indeed, the FDA has intercepted thousands of drugs, ostensibly from approved Canadian pharmacies, that originate in India, Pakistan or Thailand and were often counterfeits, sometimes adulterated and bereft of any medical properties whatsoever.

Grassley promises to address the safety problem by authorizing the FDA to inspect all incoming drugs with money raised by user fees charged to foreign exporters. His bills contain no estimates of the cost, but it will be huge and the machinery will be hard to put into effect.

Of course, the cost will be passed on to consumers.

Grassley also has come up with a device to prevent drug companies from denying extra supplies to other countries to discourage them from exporting to the United States, as a number of companies are doing: He would limit their ability to deduct advertising and promotion expenses from their taxes.

To safeguard innovation, a major responsibility lies with the Bush administration to educate the public and Congress that price controls—domestic or imported—would retard research into dread diseases. It also needs to explain the fundamental cause of disparities with price-control countries—that is, most countries.

Consumers in price-control countries cover only the manufacturing cost of drugs, not the research cost, which averages \$800 million per drug. These same price controls have cost Europe its drug-research industries, which have moved en masse to the United States.

The drumbeat for importation could possibly wane come June, when Medicare discount cards reduce drug costs.

But for now, the fatal march toward importing foreign price controls and unsafe drugs goes on.

The issues of price disparities and research sharing deserve to be raised by Bush at the G-8 summit. Here's to hoping it makes the agenda.

Kondracke is executive editor of Roll Call and a Fox News Analyst.

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

The wisdom of symbiosis and good faith

This letter in part is about faith and what better place to start than with the Bible. The Bible tells us why we only need faith the size of a mustard seed to believe in God. But the prevailing question in this letter will be, what is the measure of faith to believe in our fellow mankind? The Bible also tells us we can learn from a child and even the ant—and its true, as you will gather from this letter of wisdom on the collective bargaining issue.

Symbiosis, "the relationship of living together between two or more different organisms in close association, especially when mutually beneficial." Good faith is something positive or truthful with confident belief or trust. These are the two powerful concepts dictating the collective bargaining relationship between teachers and BOE. If collective bargaining is driven by concepts so strong and so positive in their very nature, then why should anyone fear collective bargaining? I'll tell you why: "No faith."

We should also consider the wisdom of FDR, who said: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself," especially in a relationship based on symbiosis and good faith. Teachers and BOE are joined at the hip in a special symbiotic relationship demanded by Constitutional law that must be driven by good faith. With teachers being PSS' most valuable asset, any lay person would realize that a good working agreement is necessary in the best interest of the entire institution. Any rejection to symbiosis or unfaithful negotiation tactics by either party could easily create the "US vs THEM" scenarios we see with unions and we all know this scenario can have a strong adverse affect on the entire school system.

Presently BOE's faith is being tested but teachers will also face the test of faith in negotiations because we know there are things teachers want that BOE can't give at the present. Even though the law only extends to the board level, the symbiotic paradigm does not stop at the board level. The paradigm extends to the Legislature and every student, parent, individual teacher, staff member and administrator. I can't tell you how it bothered me to be forced to go against symbiosis and challenge teachers on representation when we should have all been working together in building a stronger symbiotic relationship with each other. But sometimes you have to make a stand and even take a step backward before you can move forward to make real progress. But thank goodness it's behind us (teachers) now, at least for the next four years and hopefully by then teachers will have become more symbiotic among ourselves.

Even though there was an apparent mix up with protocols, I want to thank the board, especially the chairman, for working with me to get the collective bargaining issue on the road to a resolution. The board's action clearly indicates a realization that a new relationship must be created between teachers and BOE. BOE's willingness to create a committee is a giant step toward creating the symbiotic relationship desired by the CNMI Constitution without a need for the services of a union. I'm very optimistic the board and teachers will be able to work things out once we get the ground rules established.

I also hope this letter will help to ease some of the tension over collective bargaining because it has already been stated in the news that certain officials at PSS and BOE are nervous. I also know teachers, people in government, the community and many legal minds are waiting to see the end results of my collective bargaining efforts for teachers. In fact, one of the two main reasons I wrote this letter was to make a public disclaimer because if the relationship does not turn out to be a symbiotic relationship driven by good faith, everyone will know I tried and it was not my fault. I don't have any power over the board; not even a vote and the only thing I can do as the BOE Teacher Rep. is seek out a symbolic relationship with BOE, driven by a permanent good faith negotiated agreement. A special thanks to William S. Torres for your help, on behalf of CNMI Public School Teachers. All teachers and BOE, one direction!

Ambrose M. Bennett
BOE Teacher Representative

Saipan Tribune

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Potable water—a critical component to development

Q How critical is an adequate supply of potable water in our economic development and what can we do about it?

A Water is a basic essential of life, let alone its need for promoting economic development. From a development point of view it should be considered as a key infrastructure component. In my answer to infrastructure needs for development I did mention the importance of adequate supply of potable and running water to sustain and promote economic development in the CNMI. Numerous studies through consultants have been done by CUC and other agencies reflecting the critical need of this important resource. At present, we have a high level task force headed by Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente in place to tackle this issue.

According to media reports, this task force estimates that it would cost about \$200 million to upgrade Saipan's water delivery system. Seems to be a hefty amount, even without including the cost of building a comparable wastewater disposal system. Based on the total number of households it would amount to about \$14,000 per household and assuming an equal amount for building wastewater system it would be \$28,000 per household. On top of this public expenditure then each household might be paying around \$50 a month for water bill. As to where the public expense money is to come from, certainly from the taxpayers because the government does not make money but only spend. Some money may be coming from the feds, which of course is not free but with a lot of stringent strings attached.

By MOHAMMAD ASHRAF, PH.D.

Ashraf is an International Resource Economist. He is solely responsible for the views expressed in this column and doesn't represent the views of Saipan Tribune. His email address is ashmdr@hotmail.com



Among measures suggested to tackle this issue is to install smart meters because people are believed to be wasting water. Have these meters been tested for their performance on different locations, because the water quality is much variable. I think smart meters will need "smart water" to flow through them and not like the one coming through my waterline, with sand, gravel, and calcification chunks.

I believe the water task force must have done a thorough study with the help and advice from experts. I wonder if they noted some alternatives as well, such as giving incentives to households to install bigger catchment systems and use water purification devices to make the water potable; encouraging the installation of "smart faucets"—auto shut off type—that can help reduce water wastage significantly; and feasibility of building reservoirs to collect run-off water during the stormy rains. To my knowledge, simple and affordable devices are available to make catchment water potable.

Popular culture dissects cloning

By JAMES P. PINKERTON

Special to Newsday

A lthough H.G. Wells wrote about melding man and animal in his 1896 novel, "The Island of Dr. Moreau," and the geneticist J.B.S. Haldane speculated about eugenically engineered babies as early as 1924, it was not until the discovery of DNA in the '50s that biology began to catch up with fantasy.

So today, the cloning of large mammals is routine. As for human mammals, doctors, as well as crackpots, in such different places as Rome, Kuwait, and Quebec, have claimed to be in the process of cloning humans—although no human clones have been revealed.

Americans, meanwhile, are caught in a contradiction. On the one hand, most oppose cloning human beings. On the other hand, almost all support energetic medical research. And so ethicists and politicians have tried to distinguish between "therapeutic cloning," in which embryos are created asexually so that their "stem cells" can be utilized, and "reproductive cloning," in which an embryo is brought to term. The problem, of course, is that in the early clone stages, "therapeutic" is identical to "reproductive."

This inability to distinguish the two techniques has paralyzed federal legislation for years. Those who argue, on moral grounds, that all cloning, for any purpose, should be banned have been stymied by those who, on medical grounds, support some cloning. Indeed, the pro-research side scored a victory recently when Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., a supporter of therapeutic cloning, beat back a primary challenge from a conservative opponent who opposed all such laboratory activity. In the meantime, states such as California and

New Jersey have enacted legislation to encourage research cloning; the Golden and Garden states cite the health benefits and also the economic benefits of such enterprise.

And now "Godsend" bids to find its place in the cultural twilight zone between feasibility and legality. The film takes a frankly alarmist line; the production literature cites with approval the work of Leon Kass, chairman of the presidential bioethics commission, who opposes any type of research cloning. Indeed, just last year Kass published "The Beginning of Wisdom," a book urging readers to use the Old Testament as a tool for measuring the value of scientific progress.

The film itself isn't that reactionary, but "Godsend" channels the same fears first expressed in "Frankenstein." As the De Niro character says to a couple who have cloned their way past traditional boundaries, "You think you can just open Pandora's Box and close it?" That is, once such medical technology is let loose, it will stay on the loose—or go on a rampage.

"Godsend" is satisfied to let the subject rest there; those who tamper with Mother Nature are punished by Mother Nature.

But at the same time, the film reminds us that medical science began with the noblest of purposes—relief from pain, relief from grief. Indeed, more often than not, medical science has delivered on its promises, which explains why, two centuries after "Frankenstein," scientists are still going strong, and why most people are still applauding.

Science is the engine, while culture is the steering wheel and, occasionally, the brake. But ultimately, the motion is always forward, because hope is stronger than fear—or the occasional scary movie.

Pinkerton is a Newsday columnist.

Deity reference deleted

By RICH LOWRY

King Features Syndicate

Excerpted from a public-school history textbook sometime in the future:

E... so the Pilgrims came to America, motivated by a religious vision. As the Mayflower Compact put it, they undertook their voyage "for the glory of [deity reference deleted], and advancement of the Christian faith." They agreed to "solemnly and mutually in the presence of [deity reference deleted], and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic."

Later, the Great Awakening in the first half of the 18th century was, in the words of historian Paul Johnson, a "proto-revolutionary event," helping to create an American national consciousness. The minister Jonathan Edwards was a seminal figure in the awakening. He could preach fire and brimstone, as in his famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an [angry deity reference deleted]."

In the revolutionary generation, America had such gifted leaders and events transpired in such a felicitous way that one writer concluded "an [heavenly body reference deleted] rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm." At Valley Forge, George Washington exhorted his troops: "The signal instances of providential [word deleted, due to unnecessary capitalization] which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labors with complete success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the [indirect deity reference deleted] of all Good."

In a classic expression of religiosity, Abraham Lincoln said in

his second inaugural address, "If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of [deity reference deleted], must needs come, but which, having continued through [third person possessive deleted] appointed time, [third person pronoun deleted] now wills to remove, and that [third person pronoun deleted] gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living [deity reference deleted] always ascribe to [indirect object deleted]?"

American presidents continued to make such references, even as late as the presidency of George W. Bush. Bush told the nation after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that [deity reference deleted] is not neutral between them."

A sea change occurred in 2002 when the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the phrase "under [deity reference deleted]" in the Pledge of Allegiance was an unconstitutional establishment of religion. Eventually it became impermissible to mention [deity reference deleted] in publicly funded schoolbooks, since such references might unconstitutionally make atheist students feel uncomfortable by confronting them with the benign influence of religion on American history and with the fact that many admirable American historical figures had believed in [deity reference deleted].

Where the aggressive secularist trend will end is impossible to predict, or, as the expression used to go, "[deity reference deleted] only knows..."

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

**ADOPT-A-SAILOR**

Sailors of the USS Cowpens pose for a souvenir snapshot after dinner on Friday with the family of Robert and Linda Torres. The Torres family graciously hosted the five sailors under the DCCA "Sponsor-A-Service Member" program.

Governor proclaims Family Literacy Month

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta signed a proclamation yesterday afternoon declaring May as CNMI Family Literacy Month.

"The basic skills of everyday life... reading, writing, and doing simple arithmetic...are not skills that can be taken for granted. There are people in our community, however, that do not have the opportunity to master these skills; that's why we're here today," said Babauta.

He lauded all educators and mem-

bers of the Northern Marianas Family Literacy Consortium and the Northern Marianas College Adult Basic Education Department for their efforts in initiating and coordinating family literacy activities in the CNMI.

"Family Literacy Month is a time to call attention to this problem and to thank people and organizations that are working on addressing the literacy problems that we have," he said.

He said the CNMI and the Public School System benefit from President Bush's No Child Left Behind initiative.

"The initiative provides money and direction to ensure that every youngster

has the opportunity to learn to read and write and do basic math skills," he said. "The program extends to the CNMI."

The Family Literacy Programs is led by the San Vicente, Dandan, Koblerville, and Oleai elementary schools, Fatheread/Motherread, Joeten Kiyu Library, Library Friends, Commonsense Parenting, and the rest of the Public School System.

"In addition, the Headstart, Humanities Council, DCCA Parenting Programs, Library Friends, and Council of PTA need special commendation for all their achievements in promoting literacy," the proclamation reads.

VERIZON

From Page 1

ance auditing, economic forecasting, trend analysis, and regulatory policy analysis.

PTC also agreed to retain all existing employees in their positions and MTC has the option of hiring or transferring new Micronesian employees into such positions in the future. The applicant should also comply with the security agreement it entered into in 2003.

The other issues that the two parties agreed on are the separation of wholesale and retail portion of business related to marketing operations and to submit annual audited financial statements to the CTC to show compliance with this provision.

Also, PTC agreed to invest a minimum of \$20 million in capital expenditures during the five-year period immediately following the closing of the deal; that there will be no local rate hike for two years from deal closing; and that a trust fund would be established for the benefit of all MTC employees.

Aside from the inter-island cable issue, performance bond, and enforcement provision, all other issues were resolved during the May 2 meeting between PTI and the CNMI government.

Frink acknowledged also the great deal of time and money that both parties have spent to work out the issues surrounding the deal.

In March, the commission decided to dispose of PTI's application through a settlement process where all issues of concern could be formally deliberated on.

An earlier opinion and order issued by the commissioners admitted the governor and the consumer counsel as intervenors or rightful parties in the proceedings.

Frink, as settlement hearing officer,

Babauta 'pleased' with agreement

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta and the Micronesian Telecommunications Co. have agreed to end long distance charges between Rota, Tinian and Saipan.

In a media statement released yesterday, Babauta reported that the agreement covers both phone calls and dial-up Internet connections.

Babauta said the Attorney General's Office has been negotiating with the MTC for the past six weeks to end the inter-island toll charges.

The governor believes that the future economy of the Commonwealth requires a strong and competitively priced telecommunication system. He said the CNMI has been losing new investors because of the high cost of telecommunications in the Northern Marianas compared with other areas.

He had echoed this during his State of the Commonwealth Address Thursday, saying: "A call from Susupe to Songsong Village should cost the same as a call from Susupe to Chalan Kanoa." In that speech, he vowed to end telecommunications monopoly and promised to work hard on scrapping inter-island toll charges.

MTC is the only company that owns the fiber optic cable link but the

was tasked to work with all parties toward the development of a stipulation for settlement that would then be presented to the commission for action.

PTI had set out years ago to purchase Verizon's Saipan service but has met a tough approval process.

governor stressed that he would continue fighting to open the fiber optic cable to competition.

The governor also said that he wants customers from Rota, Tinian and Saipan be reimbursed for inter-island long distance charges they paid in previous years. "But that issue remains to be settled. MTC currently faces litigation on these over-charges," reads the media statement.

The governor also urged that any new owner of the local phone company should invest in equipment and training so that the CNMI could have a state-of-the-art telecommunication system.

In a report submitted by settlement hearing officer Sean Emory Frink, the MTC has agreed to invest \$20 million over the next five years. The company also agreed to continue its current reliance on local workers and to provide ongoing management training to its employees.

The governor also said that his goals to open competition in the telecommunication industry took one step forward when the MTC agreed to create a new wholesale group within the company. The group will be independent of the rest of the company and will sell access on MTC's network both to MTC affiliates and to other telecommunication companies at the same rate.

The PTI-MTC purchase deal got the required U.S. nod from the Federal Communications Commission, but is awaiting local approval from CTC prior to issuance of a license to do business in the CNMI.

GOVT

From Page 1

pumping stations where agencies and departments' vehicles gas up.

At least 30 fleet cards were confiscated, including those that were issued out to governor's press secretary Pete Callaghan, Rota Mayor's Office, Tinian Liaison Office, Tinian Mayor's Office, Special Assistant for Administration, former Rep. Pedro Castro, Sports and Recreation Division, and Department of Lands and Natural Resources, among others.

The Saipan Tribune came upon Mobil's hot list at one of its gas stations on the island but the station declined to give a copy of the list when asked.

Callaghan admitted that his fleet card was confiscated while he was gassing up at a Mobil station. He said the Finance Department is handling

DRAFT

From Page 1

no. 236-0992.

Federal court Chief Judge Alex R. Munson issued the order Monday last week that green-lighted the draft regulations' publication in the Register.

In his order, Munson said that DOLI and Sagana, through his lawyer Joe Hill, have told the court that they have worked together to meet the requirements of due process and the Commonwealth Administrative Procedures Act. He discharged the parties from their duties under the settlement agreement.

"The court is satisfied with the representations of the attorneys as officers of the court that they have fulfilled their mutual obligation to draft proposed rules and regulations and that the draft presented to the court will now be published by the [Labor Department], made available for public comment, and adopted by the department within a reasonable period of time," Munson said.

DEPUTY

From Page 1

The Supreme Court requires government attorneys to be admitted to the roll of attorneys of the CNMI Bar after practicing law in the CNMI on four-year government attorney licenses. Once Lemons' license expires, he will not be allowed to practice law in the CNMI pursuant to existing regulations.

Lemons declined to speak when sought for comments.

Attorney General Pamela Brown said Lemons' license would expire sometime in late June or early July. Brown, however, defended Lemons' competence, saying that she and other lawyers at the AG's office have been "very pleased with his performance."

Before becoming Deputy AG, Lemons served as prosecutor for the office's Criminal Division, which he later headed as chief prosecutor. He had represented the government as lead prosecutor in controversial criminal cases.

Brown disclosed that Lemons had appealed to the Supreme Court for a regrading of his bar exams.

Sources said Lemons was one of three lawyers who flunked the exams administered by the Supreme Court last Feb. 25 and 26. Eight of the 11 lawyers who took the bar passed the exams.

The eight, plus two other attorneys

the problem. He echoed Atalig's statement that a check had been cut last week to take care of the unpaid gas account.

"It [problem] should be arranged in a day or two. Those were not really confiscated, they would hold on to these fleet cards until payments are made. If that is settled, then Mobil will begin issuing out all these fleet cards again," he said.

Callaghan tried to call Antoinette Calvo of the Commonwealth Treasury to confirm whether the check was issued out. However, Calvo could not be reached.

The public information officer said that fleet cards are issued to every agency and departments, with the names of each agency affixed to them.

Callaghan said all bills for the gas purchase are accumulated and the Treasury issues out a check for gas payment.

He said that, since the court cannot foresee problems that may arise in the future, it is not prepared to nor should it "endorse" or "approve" the draft.

"The final measure of good faith will be demonstrated by the implementation and utilization of the rules and regulations, which will benefit not only the department, but those who come in contact with its procedures," he added.

Munson said the court would be ready to assist the parties should any problem arise.

He clarified, though, that the order should not be used or interpreted to dispose of any issue that is pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals. Sagana and the DOLI are arguing on the constitutionality of the Nonresident Workers' Act before the appellate court.

Besides seeking to allow alien workers to obtain multiple jobs, the draft guidelines incorporate provisions that will allow them to engage in casual employment for up to eight hours in a 30-day period.

who had hurdled a prior batch of bar exams, would be sworn in today by the High Court for admission to the CNMI Bar.

Unlimited license term

Brown said she is not in favor of existing regulations that mandate that government attorneys take the CNMI Bar exams to allow them to continue their legal practice in the Commonwealth after the expiration of four-year government attorney licenses.

She vouched, instead, for the issuance of government attorney licenses with unlimited term. But she said government attorneys should be required to take the CNMI Bar exams if they want to engage in private law practice.

With some government attorneys becoming non-marketable in the private sector, Brown said the existing policy discourages these lawyers to remain on the islands. Offices with government attorneys would then have to hire replacement lawyers from off-island, she added.

Brown said she did not make an official recommendation to the Supreme Court for a policy change regarding government attorney licenses. But she said the regulations generally affect not just the AGO, but also other public offices such as the Public Defender's Office, the Micronesian Legal Services and the Office of Public Auditor.

MY WAVE Clubs to hold 2nd tourism summit

MY WAVE Club members from over 12 schools within the Public School System will be converging Friday at the Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach for the 2nd Annual MY WAVE Club Tourism Summit.

MY WAVE Clubs were organized by the Marianas Tourism Education Council with the help of PSS to teach students the value of tourism at an early age in view of persuading them to pursue a career in the visitor industry in the future.

Among officials to be present in the event are Rep. Ray Yumul, chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism; Jonas F. Ogren, managing director of the Marianas Visitors Authority and interim MTEC president; PSS Commissioner Rita H. Inos; and Alex Sablan, president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Ogren said everybody is invited to join the event and be part of efforts to boost the CNMI tourism industry from the community and school levels.

The event will start at 9am, and conclude at 1pm.

The Rota MY WAVE contingent will send a 35-member delegation.

'Maintain ban on betel nuts from Guam'

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

A visiting tropical plant specialist has recommended the continued ban on import of betel nuts from bud rot-ridden areas such as Guam.

Dr. Andre Drenth of Tropical Plant Protection Research Center in Australia said in his April 29, 2004 report that the ban is important to keep Saipan free from the plant infection.

He said a survey of other places in the CNMI such as Tinian and Rota should also be made to check for the

presence of the disease. So far, he said, Saipan remains free from the bud rot caused by Phytophtoria.

The same disease struck Saipan betel nuts in 1997 and 1998. Reports said the disease wiped out up to 10,000 betel nuts trees on the island.

Drenth said that swift action and weather conditions unsuitable for the rapid spread of the disease led to its containment back in 1998. Since 1998 there have been no reports of the disease on Saipan.

In July 2003, bud rot disease was reported in Merizo, Guam.

By January this year, the disease had reportedly spread and infected some 6,000 areca trees or betel nut trees in southern Guam.

Drenth said the disease has not been found in other parts of Guam.

He said continued distribution of educational leaflets be made to promote awareness among areca tree growers.

He said all trees that show symptoms, such as yellowing spear leaf or spots on the outer leaf sheaths, should be cut down. The trunk should then be sprayed immediately with a formulation of Kocide.

He said authorities need to apply for regulatory use of Phosphate, Agrifos 400, and spray it on all seedlings and young plants in southern Guam.

To prevent its spread to other areas, Drenth said that smaller areas in Micronesia should be surveyed for the presence of the bud rot.

Betel nut infection on Guam has resulted in a recent increase in the price of betel nuts on Saipan. Local authorities said that right now, betel nuts are sold at \$0.25 cents each. During normal production, 10-12 pieces cost \$1.

Earlier, agriculture specialist

Isidoro Cabrera had projected that the Marianas would be facing a possible shortage of betel nuts due to the Guam infection and a recent typhoon in Yap, CNMI's largest exporter of betel nuts.

Cabrera said the CNMI normally imports some 100,000 pieces of betel nuts a month from Yap. About 50 percent of the local residents in the CNMI engage in betel nut chewing. T

he CNMI consumes some 100,000 pieces of betel nuts a week. Annually, the CNMI chewing population consumes some nearly 5 million pieces of betel nuts.

Labor execs to discuss law on alien workers in SCC meeting

Department of Labor officials will be providing a general overview of the Nonresident Workers Act and will give an update on the application and review process of hiring nonresident workers in this month's general membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

The guest speakers are Dean Tenorio, Director of Labor; Gil San Nicolas, Deputy Director of Labor; Kevin Lynch, chief legal counsel; and Jeffrey Camacho, assistant supervisor of the Labor Processing Section.

All chamber members are encouraged to attend the meeting to find out more about this important topic. The chamber's general membership meeting, which is held the first Wednes-

day of every month, is open to the general public.

This month's meeting will be held at the Dai-Ichi Hotel's Azucena I and II centers and registration will begin at 11:30am. A \$12 fee will be charged to both members and non-members to cover the cost of the meals. The event is scheduled to proceed at noon and last until 1:30pm.

F & B (Bobby Cadillacs) and Taga Pacific CNMI Inc. (National Car Rental and Alamo Rent A Car) are the newest members of the Chamber. They will be entitled to all the chamber benefits, including reduced health care premiums provided by HMO member PacifiCare Asia Pacific, membership rates to chamber workshops and

seminars, which will provide information to businesses to help them improve the operations of their enterprise in a variety of areas from accounting

to employment issues, access to chamber members' network via fax, email, and newsletters, as well obtain resources of the Asia Pacific Council of Ameri-

can Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce under the Saipan chamber's membership in these organizations.

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MCS to open school year with new building

After more than a decade of planning, Mount Carmel School will proudly open the doors to its new middle school building on Aug. 11 this year.

During school year 1992/1993, Sister Mary Angela Perez began the development of a master plan that would bring the facilities at Mount Carmel School into the new millennium. The plan, which included a new high school facility, new middle school facility, as well as a new gymnasium, have since undergone many changes, all to meet the ever changing needs of the students and faculty in the Mount Carmel School community as well as the budget for the projects.

With these in mind, the Mount Carmel School board of directors decided to self-construct the new middle school building. The board, chaired by retired Judge Edward Manibusan, along with Mount Carmel School president, Margaret C. Dela Cruz, created a special Building Committee led by local businessman and parent, Rick Kautz.

According to Dela Cruz, it is Kautz' committee that is taking care of the construction details, including making sure to keep the project within the budget. Meeting on a regular basis, the committee made the decisions on products that need to be bought and kept the project on track with the timeline for



Mount Carmel School's new middle school building, approximately three weeks away from completion. The building will be open to students in grades 5-8 beginning on August 11 for the 2004-2005 school year.

completion.

"We are excited to have the new middle school building opening for the 2004/2005 school year because it will give the students a more comfortable learning environment," said MCS principal Todd Blahnik.

Since 1989, the school has been using buildings on the south side of campus that were built with the intention of being "temporary." Over the years, both the grade school and the middle school students have used the tempo-

rary school buildings and, though they have served their purpose well, this new middle school building will be well received by all those who have become accustomed to life in the temporary buildings.

Besides moving from an almost 15-year-old temporary facility into a new building, students will be excited to find new air-conditioning units that keep the rooms at a continuously comfortable level and run quieter, creating a more conducive learning environment.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DEQ cites operators of 2 illegal dumps

By JOHN RAVELLO
REPORTER

The Division of Environmental Quality recently discovered the presence of two illegal dumpsites in Chalan Laulau and San Vicente, and has issued separate citations against their operators.

The DEQ gave Rene Batallones and Natividad C. Sablan until yesterday to remove solid wastes from the sites, directing them to dispose of them at the Marpi landfill.

The agency ordered the two to stop operating the dumps, saying they are violating CNMI Solid Waste Management regulations.

DEQ director John I. Castro Jr. said the open dump operated by Batallones is located at the Motion Automotive Repair Center Inc. in Chalan Laulau.

He said the agency's enforcement officers conducted an inspection at the site and observed assorted solid waste improperly dumped at the area.

According to Castro, the wastes include used batteries, automotive parts, abandoned vehicles, empty motor oil containers, used tires and household wastes.

Castro said the junk vehicles should be disposed of at a regulated recycling facility, while the rest should go to the landfill.

Sablan's San Vicente residence, meanwhile, became an open dump for household and green wastes, furniture and construction debris.

The DEQ threatened to fine Batallones and Sablan if they fail to comply with its directives in the citations.

DPS to give out gun safety locks on three islands

The Department of Public Safety will be handing out gun safety locks next week in conjunction with their first annual gun safety month.

The gun safety committee will be at the Multi-Purpose Center on May 5 from 3pm to 6pm and on

May 6 from 8am to 12pm.

The committee will be on Tinian for distribution of the gun safety locks on May 6 from 1pm to 6pm in front of the Tinian Police Station/Court House.

The committee will be on Rota on

May 7. The gun safety lock distribution will take place at the Songsong-based Police Station from 9am to 12pm and at the Sinapalo Police Station from 1pm to 4pm.

Gun owners are encouraged to visit these sites on the scheduled days.

May is Asian, Pacific American Heritage Month

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important anniversaries: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (May 10, 1869). In 1992, Congress expanded the 10-day observance to a month long celebration. Below are some tidbits of information about this particular segment of the national population, as gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau:

943,000—The estimated number of U.S. residents who say they are native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander or native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander in combination with one or more other races. This group comprises 0.3 percent of the total population. Since Census 2000, the number of people who are part of this group has increased 4 percent.

Income and Poverty

\$52,018—The 2002 median income of households whose householders reported their race as either Asian or native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander (and who may or may not have reported any other race). This income level represented a 4.5 percent decline in real dollars from 2001, but is still much higher than the 2002 median of \$42,409 for all households.

10.2 percent—The poverty rate in 2002

for those who reported their race as either Asian or native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander (and may or may not have reported any other race). This rate is not statistically different from the rate for Asians and Pacific islanders in 2001.

Education

47 percent—The percentage of Asians and Pacific islanders age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher. Asians and Pacific islanders have the highest proportion of college graduates of any race or ethnic group in the country. The corresponding rate for all adults in this age group is 27 percent.

87 percent—The percentage of Asians and Pacific islanders 25 and over who are high school graduates. The corresponding rate for all adults in this age group is 84 percent.

16 percent—The percentage of Asians and Pacific islanders 25 and over with an advanced degree (e.g., master's, Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.). This amounts to 1.3 million Asians and Pacific islanders. The corresponding rate for all adults in this age group is 9 percent.

Languages

2.0 million—The number of people who speak Chinese at home. Next to Spanish, Chinese is the most widely spoken non-English language in the country. French and German rank third and fourth, but Tagalog (1.2 million)

ranks fifth, Vietnamese (1.0 million) sixth and Korean (894,000) eighth. The number of Vietnamese speakers and the number of Italian speakers (in seventh place) are not statistically different.

Coming to America

8.3 million—The number of foreign-born residents in the United States who were born in Asia. Asian-born residents comprise one-fourth of the nation's total foreign-born population.

48 percent—The percentage of the foreign-born population from Asia who are naturalized U.S. citizens. The corresponding rate for the foreign-born population as a whole is 37 percent.

1.5 million—The number of foreign-born people from China. Next to Mexico, China is the leading country of birth for the nation's foreign-born. Also among the top 10 countries of birth for the foreign-born population are the Philippines, India, Vietnam and Korea.

Serving Our Nation

351,000—The number of Asian American military veterans. There are 57,000 veterans who are of native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander heritage.

Jobs

About 75 percent of Asian and Pacific islander men age 16 and over and 59

will find it easy to access memos and daily bulletins on the computers right in their classrooms. Those who have been in concrete classrooms will know that echoing can be a problem. Acoustic drop ceiling tiles in the new middle school building will help eliminate some of the echoing to provide students with a comfortable learning environment.

Fifth through eighth grade students at Mount Carmel School, including several of the grade school's elective teachers, will be moving to the new building over the summer to prepare for the first students to be taught in the new facility.

"The most exciting part of this building project has been coming to school each morning and seeing the daily progression of the building," said Dela Cruz.

Changes in the school calendar were made in the 2003/2004 school year to help accommodate the early phase of this building's construction. The 2004/2005 school year calendar will be back to normal, however, and students, parents and faculty of the middle school should be eager to get back to classes on August 11, 2004—the first day of classes and the official grand opening and dedication of the new Mount Carmel School Middle School building.

Firearms identification cards must be presented to receive a free gun safety lock.

In addition, DPS would like to advise firearm/gun owners whose registration cards have expired to renew their registration.

percent of women are in the civilian labor force. Among these, 41 percent of men and 37 percent of women are in managerial and professional occupations.

Population Distribution

A total of 2.7 million Asian American residents are Chinese (excluding Taiwanese) or Chinese (excluding Taiwanese) in combination with one or more other races or Asian groups, making Chinese the leading Asian nation. Filipino (2.4 million) and Asian Indian (1.9 million) follow. The largest Pacific islander groups are native Hawaiian (401,000) and Samoan (133,000).

95 percent—The percentage of Asian and Pacific islanders who live in metropolitan areas. Fifty-one percent of Asians and Pacific islanders live in the Western part of the United States.

4.5 million—The number of California residents who are Asian, making the Golden State home to the largest number of Asian Americans of any state. Hawaii has the largest number of native Hawaiians and other Pacific islanders at 271,000.

58 percent—The percentage of Hawaii's population that is Asian, tops in the nation. For native Hawaiians and other Pacific islanders, Hawaii is also the leader, with 22 percent of the state's population belonging to this race group.

Business

Cape Air operation seen this summer

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Cape Air, a Massachusetts-based airline firm, expects to begin operations in the Marianas chain this summer, with flight services between Guam, Rota, and Saipan.

Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Car-

los Salas said yesterday that the company expects to have office and counter space on Rota open and ready for business by July 1. He said the airline also targets August 1 as the date its Saipan and Guam offices and counter spaces will open.

"We're [CPA] working with them and helping them facilitate their needs in the

airports and realize their target dates," he said.

Salas said the company will operate two 46-passenger turbo-propeller-powered ATR-42 aircrafts that have been leased from Continental.

The executive director also said that the firm's office and counter space employees on Saipan and Guam will also be in

coordination with Continental.

"The firm has coordinated use of employees and resources from Continental only for Guam and Saipan," he said. "The office and counter space on Rota will be handled strictly by Cape Air employees only."

According to a report that came out in the Cape Cod Times, part of the reason why

the airline company is interested in penetrating the Pacific market is the more than 1 million tourists that travel to the Marianas a year. The report said many of these tourists travel on to the smaller, more remote islands that the airline hopes to serve.

Currently servicing the routes within the Marianas are Continental Micronesia, North-

west, and Pacific Islands Aviation. Continental is already a Cape Air "code share" partner, meaning customers connect from Continental flights directly to Cape Air planes with a single reservation.

Cape Air currently flies nine-passenger Cessna 402 turboprop aircraft. The company will be based on Guam.

Global tourism industry bouncing back

By ANWAR FARUQI
AP WRITER

DOHA, Qatar (AP)—The global travel and tourism industry should grow by nearly 6 percent this year, showing it has bounced back from the effects of terrorism, war and the SARS epidemic, industry experts said Sunday.

The industry, which employs more than 8 percent of the world's work force, is poised to grow at 4.5 percent annually over the next decade, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.

The council told a tourism conference of 800 delegates that it projected a combined growth of 5.9 percent for all travel-related

industries this year, bringing the industries to an aggregate income of \$5.5 trillion.

During the past three years, the industries have been hampered by the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and an epidemic of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, in Asia and Canada.

But countries were learning how to entice tourists to return after such setbacks, WTTC chairman Vincent A. Wolfington said.

"Travelers will travel even when they know there is a risk of terrorism, as long as they feel that countries they are traveling to are on top of it, and trying to minimize the risks," said Wolfington, speaking on the side-

lines of the two-day conference that ended Sunday.

"The trend we have seen since 9/11 is that with each incidence of terrorism, the rebound and the resilience of the economy has been quicker."

Delegates from Turkey and Spain confirmed his point, saying their economies had taken only weeks to recover from recent terror atrocities.

Jose Luis Zoreda, who runs Exceltur, which represents the Spanish travel industry, said 80 percent of firms in Spain have reported that they recovered within a month from the March 11 train bombings that killed nearly 200 people.

"Despite the events of March 11, our tourism forecasts for

2004 remain unchanged," said Zoreda. Spain receives some 53 million tourists a year, making it the No. 2 destination in the world after France.

The deputy undersecretary at the Turkish Ministry of Tourism, Ali Alp, said his country had also had recovered quickly from suicide bombings that killed 62 people in Istanbul in November.

But while countries such as Spain and Turkey have the resources to recover quickly, poorer nations such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Morocco have not bounced back as fast from terrorist attacks.

At the conference, a frequent target of criticism for failing to invest in tourist pro-



motion was, strangely enough, the government of the world's richest country.

Douglas Baker, deputy assistant secretary for tourism at the U.S. Department of Commerce, said he had virtually no promotion budget to attract

foreign travelers.

"The U.S. has historically never promoted itself as a tourist destination," Baker said. He added that the Congress had allocated about \$15 million to promotion, but later redirected the money to other priorities.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The evening's performers relax after the show. From left are Samira, Tina Turner impersonator, Irwin and Jonathan, from the Embassy, Marcos Fong, Subway Marketing Representative, Joyce Gamboa, Subway Event Coordinator, DJ Roonie G, Wendy and Chris, from the Embassy, Tony So and Tony Rodriguez, from All-so Entertainment, coordinators of the event.

Subway® celebrates 15 years in Micronesia

Subway® Guam celebrated its 15th Anniversary in Micronesia by hosting a Block Party at their Subway® Tumon restaurant on April 23. This celebration marks 15 years since the first Subway® Restaurant opened on Guam in the village of Yigo in 1989.

The event was hosted by local disc jockey Rick Nauta and included local entertainment from magician, Ryan Andersen and local band, Joyride.

Other entertainment includ-

ed a Sunny Electronics Bass competition and a Sub Jammer competition for the best Sandwich Artist®. The evening became hotter as The Embassy, a band from Sydney, Australia, performed on stage. A Tribute to Tina Turner got the crowd cheering and singing along to their favorite Tina songs. The night was completed with the unveiling of the newest DJ technology from Pioneer by world famous DJ Roonie G.

According to Subway® marketing representative Marcos Fong, the event was a success and was Subway® Guam's way to thank their loyal customers.

"We wanted a way to say 'thank you Guam' and what better way to do so than throwing a free party for everyone! I hope everyone that went had fun with us."

Throughout the evening, Subway offered specials on their sandwiches and also allowed

their best Sandwich Artists® to compete and bring home a trophy crowning the best of the best.

Subway® Guam currently has thirteen locations on Guam and three on Saipan. They continue to be active in community-based events such as the CNMI Mathcounts, local health fairs, and other health-related events.

For more information on Subway, visit <http://www.subway-pacific.com>.



Senator Ray Tenorio (far right) presents a Legislative Resolution on behalf of the Guam Legislature to congratulate Subway Guam and Saipan for 15 years of service to the community. The presentation was done at Subway's 15th Anniversary Block Party in Tumon. Receiving the resolution were Stella Fong, VP Subway Guam (far left) and Marcos Fong, Marketing Representative (middle).

Subway® receives legislative resolution

GUAM—Guam Sen. Ray Tenorio presented a resolution to Subway® Guam at the company's Block Party on April 23, congratulating it for 15 years of successful operation on Guam.

Legislative Resolution No.133 was received by Stella Fong, vice president of Subway® Guam, and Marcos Fong, marketing representative, on stage during the event.

After the presentation, Marcos Fong said: "We are honored to receive this resolution and thank Guam for all the

support they have given us over the years. Subway® will continue to be a big part of Guam's community and we hope the community will support us as well."

Subway® Guam currently has thirteen locations on Guam and three on Saipan. They continue to be active in community-based events such as the CNMI Mathcounts, local health fairs, and other health-related events.

For more information on Subway, visit <http://www.subwaypacific.com>.

Return-of-premium insurance takes a while

NEW YORK (AP)—There's an emerging life-insurance product that promises to fully refund your money if you live long enough to collect.

So-called return-of-premium term life insurance is being touted as the solution to long-standing problems with the current line of life-insurance products.

Regular term life insurance, while cheap, is often viewed as

money down the drain because you don't get anything out of it unless you die. Permanent life insurance offers an investment component, but it's often viewed as too costly and complex. Return-of-premium insurance offers benefits from both worlds since its cost structure is closer to term life, but it also offers a savings component like permanent insurance.

Still, interested buyers need

to consider the potential pitfalls of this type of insurance before buying it. The main thing to know is that you win with return-of-premium insurance only if you hold the policy until it expires. Plus, you won't be able to take advantage of further drops in life-insurance premiums, which are expected to continue due to revised mortality expectations. Finally, don't assume all return-of-premium products are cheap compared with term life.

"This is one of those look-before-you-leap deals," said Robert Bland, chief executive of Quotesmith.com Inc., which operates the Web site Insure.com.

Few companies offer return-

of-premium policies, although the offerings are growing. Fidelity and Guaranty Life Insurance Co. launched a return-of-premium term product in 2001, AIG American General, a unit of American International Group Inc., followed in 2002, and Aegon N.V. launched one in March of this year.

The attraction of the policies is clear: A healthy 40-year old man who wants a \$500,000 death benefit might pay \$895 a year for a term life policy, according to data from Insure.com. The cheapest 30-year return-of-premium policy would cost an additional \$337 a year. But that's far less than he would pay for the cheapest standard permanent

life policy, which would cost \$3,252 a year. (All the quotes were from companies with an A+ insurance rating.)

And the benefits of the return-of-premium policy are greater than the term life policy. After 30 years, the policyholder would be refunded a total of \$36,960. To get a \$36,960 lump sum by investing the additional \$337 he paid in premiums in stocks and bonds, the policyholder would have needed to ensure an average rate of return of about 8 percent a year.

There's no data on how many return-of-premium policies are terminated early because they're so new. The average term policyholder, however,

dumps insurance within eight or nine years, according to 2001 data from Limra International, an industry group in Windsor, Conn. Some insurance professionals think return-of-premium policy lapse rates will be similar. Others believe that return-of-premium lapse rates will be better because there's financial incentive for sticking it out.

If you do cut out early, there may be a refund for a portion of premiums. But the amount of the return isn't usually worth the added cost of this insurance. Fidelity & Guaranty Life, for example, will refund 15 percent of premiums paid to a policyholder who stops payments on a 30-year policy after 15 years.

Ex-PepsiCola CEO named as new Sara Lee president

CHICAGO (AP)—Brenda Barnes, who walked away from a job as president and CEO of PepsiCola North America to spend more time with her children, will become the president and chief operating officer at Sara Lee Corp., the company announced Sunday.

Barnes, 50, spent 22 years at PepsiCo, holding several positions until she was named president and CEO at PepsiCola North America in 1996. She made headlines when she quit in 1998 to be with her family.

She served as interim president and chief operating officer at Starwood Hotels & Resorts from November 1999 until March 2000.

In recent years, Barnes has served as a director on a number of corporate boards, including those of Avon Products Inc., The New York Times Company, Sears, Roebuck & Co., and Staples Inc.

"We are delighted to have a leader of Brenda's talent and experience joining Sara Lee's senior executive team," said C. Steven McMillan, the company's chairman and CEO in

a statement of the appointment that is effective July 1. "Brenda brings a tremendous wealth of knowledge, integrity and operational expertise to the company and her reputation for delivering results while building strong branded business makes her an excellent match for Sara Lee."

Barnes will report to McMillan. She does not replace anyone. McMillan now holds the title of president and the company does not currently have a chief operating officer.

Barnes said she did not know when she left PepsiCola North America what effect her decision would have on her career. But she said that her activities since then, which include serving on various corporate boards, teaching business classes and chairing the board of trustees at Augustana College, her alma mater, have made her a better businesswoman.

"I have been very plugged into the business world in very different ways," she said. "I have been very active, and I think I have been able to see business from a lot of different industries."

Buffett asserts he won't leave Coca-Cola board

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Warren Buffett likes Coke. The multibillionaire investor claims to drink several a day. The soft drink is widely distributed at his company's annual shareholders meetings. And he will remain on the Coca-Cola Co. board, he said at this weekend's Berkshire Hathaway meeting.

Some shareholder groups—including the influential Institutional Shareholder Services—had sought to remove Buffett from the board, saying the business dealings of his holding company, Berkshire Hathaway, with Atlanta-based Coke constitute a conflict of interest.

The effort failed when Buffett was re-elected last month by 84 percent of Coke's shareholders.

"I think it's absolutely silly," Buffett said of some shareholders' concerns that he could not be classified as an independent director on Coke's audit com-

mittee given his many business ties to company.

Buffett, 73, directly and indirectly holds about 200 million shares worth about \$10 billion of Coca-Cola stock—more than 8 percent of the company's outstanding shares.

Buffett's other ties to Coke include Berkshire's grocery distribution subsidiary, McLane Co., which paid \$103.9 million last year for Coke fountain syrup and other products. Coke also gave McLane \$11 million in commissions in 2003 related to the sale of the company's products to customers.

Also, Berkshire's fast-food and ice cream chain Dairy Queen paid Coke \$2.2 million for fountain syrup and other products. Coke last year gave Dairy Queen and its subsidiaries \$688,000 for promotional and marketing incentives for corporate and franchise stores.

tribune mothers day ad

World

Overdrive

2004 HONDA CR-V 4WD EX

A picnic table and something else

Base price: \$21,750

Price as tested: \$22,210

This week we test drive the 2004 CR-V 4WD EX, Honda's ingenious compact SUV that becomes the very first vehicle we've driven that comes standard with a picnic table.

Yes, a picnic table! (More on that later).

The CR-V EX offers a combination of features starting with standard four-wheel drive that is necessary to compete against the likes of Subaru Forester, Toyota Rav4 and Ford Escape.

The EX is Honda's high-end CR-V, which also comes in two-wheel drive and four-wheel-drive LX trim.

We especially like CR-V's robust 160-horsepower 2.4-liter double-overhead cam 16-valve iVTEC four-cylinder engine. It definitely gets this compact moving (we had help from the standard five-speed manual transmission), and yet the mileage stays respectable at 21 mpg city and 25 mpg highway. Also, the CR-V is certified as a low-emission vehicle, and the iVTEC is designed to go 110,000 miles before needing a tune-up.

The CR-V features "real-time" four-wheel drive, meaning it operates in front-wheel drive unless there is slippage caused by snow or other wet conditions. At this point, the rear wheels au-

tomatically engage with no buttons to push. This vehicle isn't built for four-wheeling, but it'll get you to work or school in a snowstorm with no problem.

Honda won us over with CR-V's functionality. If there's an open area in CR-V's cabin, there's probably a slot, cup holder or shelf installed. In fact, we counted 21 such places to store everything from CDs to spare change to sunglasses. A tip-down tray between the front seats also is worth noting, allowing access to the rear or room for hauling long pieces of lumber. Cargo space is also plentiful at the rear, with a deep slot and separate net area inside the side-swinging cargo door.

And we were quite amazed at the clever addition of a sturdy picnic table, which has a dual role as the cover to the spare wheel well on the cargo floor. This inch-thick, heavy plastic table, about 29-by-33 inches, has fold-down legs and sets up in seconds.

Other features include AM/FM/cassette stereo with six-disc in-dash CD changer, anti-theft feature and six speakers; cruise control; 12-volt accessory sockets; power moon roof with tilt; rear wiper/washer; rear privacy glass; 15-inch alloy wheels; 60-40 split rear seats that slide, fold

and tumble, and include a folding armrest; and a multitude of power functions.

The CR-V is also big in safety, scoring excellent in front and side impact tests. Included are driver and front-passenger airbags and side airbags; anti-lock braking; front and rear crumple zones; and side-impact door beams. The ride is good for a compact SUV, and seating is comfortable.

Important numbers include a wheelbase of 103.1 inches; curb weight of 3,287 pounds; cargo area of 33.5 cubic feet with the rear seats up, 72 with them down; and a 15.3-gallon fuel tank. Our CRV came delivered at \$22,100, including destination, but prices start at just \$19,000 for the LX model.

Honda beats some of its toughest competitors in price and is definitely in the race in this tough market. Given Honda's overall reputation, we're sure a lot of owners would find owning a CR-V a real "picnic." We rate it an eight on a scale of 1 to 10.

□ □ □

Likes: Engine power, crash safety, price, picnic table.

Dislikes: Some road noise, traction control not available, unattractive black exterior molding.



SHOP TALK

Regular or high-test?

By GREG ZYLA
KING FEATURES WEEKLY

Q: I just bought a new 2004 Toyota Highlander with a 3.3-liter V-6 engine. My dealer said it's OK to use 87-octane unleaded fuel, but in my owner's manual it clearly states that if I use 91-octane premium unleaded, I'll find that the engine performs better. What should I do?—Pam E., e-mail from Pennsylvania

A: Pam, I looked into your situation and even checked a new Highlander owner's manual, and just as you say, it does state that you can run 87-octane fuel. I also called Toyota, and the agent agreed that you can run 87 octane, but said the engine was designed to run on

91 or better.

Now, if Toyota says you can run an 87-octane rating, I'm sure it is doing so because you can, but it also says "the engine will perform better on 91-octane fuel." I'm really not sure why Toyota did this, other than to not lose sales to those looking for vehicles that run on 87-octane fuel.

From my standpoint, Toyota's new V-6 should require unleaded premium—and unleaded premium only. This new engine from Toyota is a 3.3-liter double overhead cam V-6 with lots of high-tech additions. The major reason I recommend you always use 91-octane or better fuel is because the engine has a compression ratio of 10.8 to 1, which is, in my opinion, too high for an 87-octane regular grade fuel.

If you use 87 octane, you may run the chance of engine "ping." This is a serious detonation situation where the cylinder starts to fire before it should because of carbon deposits left in the cylinder from things like—you guessed it—a too-low-octane fuel. The owner's manual also mentions engine knocking, and warns that if you use a rating lower than recommended you could cause engine damage.

In summary, spend the extra for the premium fuel. In the long run, you'll be glad you did.

Write to Greg Zyla in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send an e-mail to letters.kfws@hearstsc.com.

joeten motors truck
cmyk

Life & Style

Clinton memoir raises hopes and doubts

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP NATIONAL WRITER

As President Clinton rushes to finish his memoirs, he faces the more pressing task of writing a book deemed worthy of all the attention, an accomplishment no president has pulled off since Ulysses S. Grant.

Some leading historians

have ideas on how Clinton could do it.

"He's an intelligent fellow and if he writes as well as he talks, he could make an interesting contribution to history," says Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., author of Pulitzer Prize winning books on the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Andrew Jackson.

"I'd like to see him do two things," says David Herbert Donald, author of several acclaimed books on Abraham Lincoln. "First of all, I'd like to see him write a personal story on how he grew up and how he became who he was. Second, I'd like to see him write about how he shaped the politics of the White House, how a man of such great accomplishments also hurt himself by his foolishness."

Booksellers expect huge sales for Clinton's book, "My Life," for which he received a reported \$10 million to \$12 million and which has a first printing of 1.5 million copies. But historians hope he will offer more than platitudes about his public life or a token reference to his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The book is due out in late June.

Countless memoirs have been dulled by the impersonal touch of a ghostwriter and by a president's unwillingness to tell all he knows. Ronald Reagan, for example, had little to say about the Iran-Contra scandal and devoted a single paragraph to his first marriage, to actress Jane Wyman. Even Grant, whose memoirs were edited by Mark Twain, did not mention his famous drinking problem and wrote virtually nothing about his marriage or his presidency.

Historians have hopes for the literary quality of "My Life." Clinton is among the most well-read of presidents and his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, says he's writing the book himself.

His editor at Knopf, Robert Gottlieb, has worked with such leading authors as Toni Morrison and Robert Caro.

"There are only three presidents in the 20th century who really had a deep sense of American history: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Bill Clinton," says Joseph Ellis, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning "Founding Brothers" and an upcoming biography of George Washington.

"So I'm interested in how he brings a truly sophisticated sense of history to his book. I'd like to see him bring that to how he thinks his judgments affected the direction of both domestic and foreign policy."

But while Knopf president Sonny Mehta has promised a "revealing and remarkable" memoir from Clinton, historians wonder how much Clinton will, or can, reveal. Beyond any embarrassing details about his private life, they note that he still has good reason to keep a lot to himself. His wife, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, is considered a likely presidential candidate in 2008 or later and the former president will almost surely avoid any undue controversy.

"Presidents in their memoirs try to be above the fray, but what makes a book interesting is the fray," says Douglas Brinkley, author of an upcoming biography of Gerald Ford and of a current best seller, "Tour of Duty," about Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

"I don't think he's going to handle the Lewinsky affair

Former President Bill Clinton addresses a business breakfast on March 9, 2004 in New York.

AP

much at all," says Lincoln author Donald. "I'm not sure he's that introspective."

"What I'd really like is to have a good psychoanalyst work with him and get him to say why a man of such enormous intelligence and charm and possibility would act the way he does with women. ... That would be enormously revealing and helpful in the long run, although not, perhaps, in the short run."

Brinkley said the perfect book for Clinton to emulate isn't by a president, but by a secretary of state, Dean Acheson, who served under Harry Truman. Brinkley notes that Acheson waited nearly 20 years before

publishing "Present at the Creation," which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1970. By then, Acheson had historical perspective, the time to review documents and relief from concerns about damaging the careers of people with whom he worked.

"The problem now is you get these big advances and are expected to have the book out in two years," Brinkley says. "Clinton hasn't had time to look at all the papers and documents or to think about how his administration fits into history. I fear his book will be aimed more for *Vanity Fair* than for the historical community."

wallace

Report: Feds probe Smithsonian donation

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—Federal investigators are looking into the multimillion-dollar donation of rare musical instruments to the Smithsonian Institution from a philanthropist-turned-fugitive, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Authorities are looking into whether Herbert Axelrod committed tax fraud when he claimed that the four Stradivarius instruments were worth \$50 million, The Sunday Star-Ledger of Newark reported.

Noted violin dealer Robert Bein told the newspaper that he was asked by a federal agent if he believed the collection was worth that much.

"I told them I thought the gift to the Smithsonian was on Mars," said Bein, who has previously said he believed the collection was worth perhaps \$12 million.

Officials at the Internal Rev-

enue Service and the U.S. Attorney's office declined to comment to The Star-Ledger on whether they were investigating Axelrod's donation to the Smithsonian. Representatives of both offices did not immediately return phone calls from The Associated Press seeking comment Sunday.

Axelrod—living in Cuba since fleeing unrelated federal tax charges in the United States—also sold 30 rare stringed instruments to the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra last year at a large claimed discount.

That selling price was listed at \$18 million—including \$4 million financed by Axelrod himself and later forgiven—well below the \$50 million at which Axelrod valued the 30 instruments.

Axelrod's lawyer said his cli-

ent did nothing illegal and has not been charged in connection with the Smithsonian gift or the orchestra sale.

"If the government believed it could have brought a case against him based on either the value or authenticity of the violins, they would have," Michael Himmel told The Star-Ledger. "But they chose not to. This suggests there was no reason to bring such a case."

A federal fugitive warrant has been issued for Axelrod, 76, on charges alleging he conspired to defraud the IRS by helping a former executive of his pet-book publishing company hide \$700,000 in bonus payments in a Swiss bank account in the 1990s.

Last week Sen. Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, wrote a letter demanding that the Smith-

sonian justify the value of the instruments it received from Axelrod, The New York Times reported Sunday.

"We're seeing problems of wildly inflated in-kind donations across the board: cars, land, intellectual property and now, possibly, donations of musical instruments," Grassley said in an e-mail to the Times.

Smithsonian officials told the Times they had fully complied with the law concerning the donation.

Axelrod's violin dealer, Dietmar Machold, who performed the Smithsonian appraisal, defended it in a phone interview with The Star-Ledger.

"Look, there's only one other quartet of inlaid instruments like this anywhere in the world," he said. "The Smithsonian one was the only one on the so-called market."



'Mean Girls' tops box office with \$25M

By ANTHONY BREZNICAN
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Maybe nice guys finish last, but "Mean Girls" came in first at the weekend box office. The comedy starring Lindsay Lohan as a student who gets swept up in the backstabbing politics of fashion, love and popularity among high school cliques earned \$25 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Although it starred 17-year-old Lohan, the presence of "Saturday Night Live" star Tina Fey, who also wrote the screenplay, appealed to grown-up moviegoers. Overall, "Mean Girls" got its strength from girl power.

About 75 percent of the audience was female and about half the audience was under 18, said Wayne Lewellen, head of distribution for Paramount, which released the movie.

"The teenage girl audience has a lot of clout and a lot of discretionary income from somewhere. They've got a lot of fun money and go to see movies in groups," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Two of last week's top movies continued to perform strongly. The Denzel Washington thriller "Man on Fire" fell to No. 2 in its second week with \$15.2 million, and "13 Going on 30," which starred "Alias" TV actress Jennifer Garner as a child in an adult body, ranked third with \$10 million.

"We've got a new breed of female stars," according to Dergarabedian.



Lindsay Lohan in Paramount's "Mean Girls."

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. "Mean Girls," \$25 million. | 6. "Envy," \$6.1 million. |
| 2. "Man on Fire," \$15.2 million. | 7. "Kill Bill—Vol. 2," \$5.8 million. |
| 3. "13 Going on 30," \$10 million. | 8. "The Punisher," \$3.4 million. |
| 4. "Laws of Attraction," \$7 million. | 9. "Home on the Range," \$2.2 million. |
| 5. "Godsend," \$6.9 million. | 10. "Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed," \$2.1 million. |

Renee Fleming is ethereal in 'Rusalka'

By RONALD BLUM
AP WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—In the midst of Wagner's Ring Cycle, four largely gloomy music dramas with water creatures and death, the Metropolitan Opera revived Dvorak's "Rusalka," a lighter, brighter work filled with water creatures and death.

The production and its shimmering sets, acquired from the Vienna State Opera, were from the same team that created the Met's against-the-grain, traditional Ring, director Otto Schenk and designer Gunther Schneider-Siemssen, giving the stage a similar look.

Starring Renee Fleming, who has made the title role of the water nymph one of her specialties, "Rusalka" opened Friday night, one day before the 100th anniversary of the composer's death. She was surrounded by a strong cast that included Dolora Zajick as the witch Jezibaba, Willard White as the Water-Gnome, Eva Urbanova as the Foreign Princess and Oleg Kulko, who made his Met debut as the Prince.

"Rusalka" is similar to the story of "The Little Mermaid," who falls in love with a human.

The first act's soaring "Song to the Moon," is a highlight.



Renee Fleming, left, as "Rusalka", and Dolora Zajick as "Jezibaba" perform during dress rehearsal of Antonin Dvorak's "Rusalka" at the Metropolitan Opera, Wednesday, April 28, 2004, in New York.

In the opera, the Prince changes his mind and rejects the water nymph, then seeks a reconciliation but finds out it is too late. He winds up dead while she is eternally damned to become a spirit of death in the lower levels of the lake because of her contact with a human.

Fleming was slightly less flowing than in her concert renditions, but the soprano was singing the aria from the top of a tree set beside the lake. She warmed considerably during the rest of the performance and looked ethereal in an aqua gown as she descended into the moonlit lake during the third act's conclusion.

Zajick, who teamed with Fleming on the 1998 Decca recording, was instant energy. She hopped with delight, reveling in her evil role and injecting her powerhouse mezzo as she transformed Rusalka into human form. White, in a slimy green costume, was imposing as Rusalka's father, warning her of how deceitful humans can be.

Urbanova was elegantly evil as the Foreign Princess who lures the Prince from Rusalka during the second-act ball. Kulko, with a distinctive Russian sound to his vowels, had a slightly constricted top but was otherwise admirable as the Prince.

This production includes hopping frogs, salamanders and insects, and it emphasizes the fairy-tale aspects of the story. Conductor Andrew Davis, music director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, brought out the magic in the score, pushing to keep the sound airy and light.

With the Met season heading into its final week, there are just two additional performances mixed in during the third Ring Cycle, on Wednesday night and Saturday afternoon.

Husband's sneak attacks could mean danger ahead

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: "Krista in Jacksonville" complained that her husband sneaks up behind her when she's alone in the house and scares her. He also appears out of nowhere when she's in the shower. You advised her that his behavior is childish and a touch sadistic—and told her to hang bells on her door frames and lock the bathroom door.

While your answer was good, you may have overlooked something. Sneaking up on someone, especially a spouse, could be considered a precursor to an abusive relationship. The person doing the sneaking has the control and is doing it to scare the other person. I think Krista and her husband should get marital counseling.

SEEN IT BEFORE IN BOISE

DEAR SEEN IT BEFORE: While I did not consider the husband's behavior to be ominous, your point is worth considering. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: My father used to do the same thing to my mother (and me and my siblings) until he caught her off guard one night when she nearly slapped him back into the previous week. (She claimed it was a reflex.) He's never sneaked up on any of us again.

ANDREA IN BARSTOW, CALIF.

DEAR ANDREA: He should have considered himself lucky. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: It was with a knowing smile that I read Krista's letter. Unfortunately, sneaking up on her could put her husband's life in danger. My husband used to enjoy doing that, too, that is, until one evening when I was in the kitchen cutting some meat for dinner, and he scared me. Without meaning to, I almost stabbed him. Thankfully, I missed. Needless to say, it hasn't happened again. Ever since that incident, he always announces his presence. As a matter of fact, he kind of reminds me of the old TV series where the husband would walk in the door and holler, "Honey, I'm home!"

MEGAN IN WYOMING

DEAR MEGAN: That's one way to get your "point" across.

DEAR ABBY: My husband also liked to scare me. One night he came up from behind as I was leaving the bathroom. The hallway light was off and, not knowing who or what was behind me, my reaction was one of self-defense. I turned and hit as hard as I could.

Ten years have passed since that incident, and I recently heard him telling our kids the story of why not EVER to scare Mama.

PATRICIA IN MANHATTAN BEACH

DEAR PATRICIA: It seems you made a lasting impression.

DEAR ABBY: Regarding the letter from "Krista in Jacksonville," and her husband who sneaks up behind her when she's alone in the house: I notice she didn't mention why he persists in doing it.

I used to "surprise" my girlfriend like that, but in retrospect, I wasn't admitting even to myself that I expected to find her with someone else.

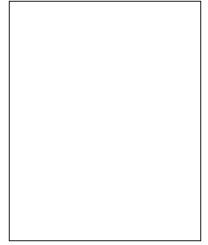
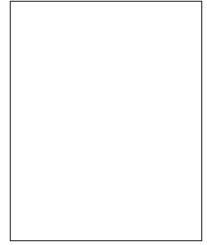
FORMER TIPTOER IN GAINESVILLE, FLA.

DEAR FORMER TIPTOER: It would be interesting to know whether your fears were justified. The kind of insecurity you describe feeds upon itself, and no amount of reassurance can make it go away. It is telling that you use the past tense to describe that relationship. Thank you for laying it on the line and providing food for thought to readers of both sexes.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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